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NSC BRIEFING

2 February 1954

INDOCHINA MILITARY SITUATION

I. New Viet Minh drive into Laos involves ten bns from Dien Bien Phu, now in Nam Hou valley.

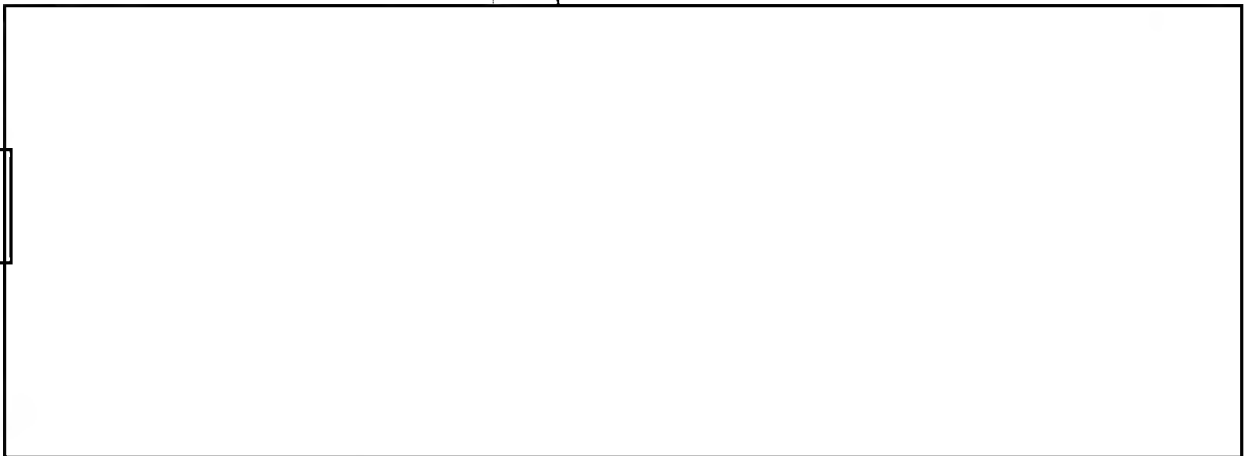
A. Some elements are now within 60 miles of Luang Prabang.

B.  Viet Minh still has about 22 bns around Dien Bien Phu, will make at least "face-saving" attack.

C. Many of these troops may turn southward if Viet Minh planning large-scale Laotian campaign.

D. French planning reinforce Luang Prabang, probably with reserves from delta. (19 BATTALIONS REMAIN AVAILABLE)

II.



B. Actually present Viet Minh strategy no change from that of last three years to win maximum amount of territory at a minimum risk.

III. Intensified Viet Minh guerrilla activity in Tonkin delta itself.

A. French reserves of 19 bns can hardly be spared; Viet Minh attacked six posts during week, blew up troop train,

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- B. Six more Viet Minh bns have infiltrated delta during week, bringing regular bns there to 18.
- IV. In central Laos and Annam, Viet Minh opened small offensives.
  - A. Several minor outposts east of Savannakhet seized; enemy believed heading southwest toward Mekong again.
  - B. In Annam, enemy attacked small inland posts in Kontum-Pleiku area, while French concentrated on coast.
- V. South of Saigon, 23 guardposts and blockhouses deserted by Vietnamese militia, in recent flareup of military activity there.
  - A. Area quiet militarily past year, but Viet Minh attempting infiltrate both civil government and militia.
  - B. Viet Minh politically active here, won over Vietnamese troops.
  - C. This activity may be timed to coincide with Viet Minh military moves elsewhere, demonstrating capability for coordinated activity throughout Indochina.

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